

# Opinions

Everybody has one

## A walk in time

I believe I took a walk back in time on Saturday.

No, Union County has never had a Farmers Market before, but I remember the days when farmers used to come to town on the weekends with a truckload of produce for sale.

People used to line up, especially if the truckload of produce included watermelons and cantaloupes. Some folks fixed up small baskets of apples, peaches or tomatoes.

I never saw too many potato trucks, although I believe they could have sold several bushels in Downtown at that time. I've never met too many folks that didn't like potatoes.

Well, on Saturday, I don't think I've ever seen local farmers beaming with as much pride as they do at the Union County Farmers Market. Constructed with Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax dollars, the Farmers Market provides a place for local farmers to sell their produce and for once, make a profit.

Our local farmers no longer have to make the drive to the Atlanta Farmers Market to sell the fruits of their labors. The time spent driving to Atlanta, the cost of the fuel and the time spent away from their families has virtually been eliminated.

Now, farmers rent a booth at the Market, back their trucks up, and sell, sell, sell. And they are selling.

Last year alone, the Market meant more than \$280,000 to local vendors. A lot of that money didn't travel to and stay in Atlanta.

In the current trend of hard economic times, locals are more than willing to drive to the local Market and purchase fresh vegetables. They're also getting a pretty good bargain. You see, farmers don't have to pay a middle man. They can broker a deal that turns a profit for themselves and gives patrons a bargain.

I saw many bargains on Saturday. I saw a lot of pride, and a lot of people having a good time.

The Union County Farmers Market is unique in the sense that it's not just about produce. There are 63 booths at the Market, and only 30 or a little over, are selling produce. The others are selling flowers, honey, jewelry, lotions and creams, handbags, unique items, and stuffed toys. The word Market has never meant so much to so many people in one community.

It's also an attraction that brings folks in from other communities. They come to get a deal at the Market and spend money in our restaurants, buy gas, and stop in our other shops in town. Bottom line, they're spending money here, and it's better than them spend-

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Charles Duncan  
**Straight Shooting**



Dream big this summer at your local library!

## Bowser

When my grandfather was a boy he acquired a puppy he called Bowser. The pup wasn't much to look at. The dog had a long body built low to the ground and big feet like Basset hound. Bowser's color was yellow like that of a Mountain Cur and he had a pointed nose like that of a Feist. The dog had very few socially redeeming features. The dog wasn't built for speed and could not keep the foxes from stealing an occasional setting hen.

Back in those days dogs got the leftovers from the dinner table. Bowser had a sweet tooth and developed a taste for leftover peach cobbler. One time Bowser was sick and my grandfather nursed him back to health by sneaking the dog some peach cobbler my great grandmother had made. Papa said that his mother frowned on the idea of giving that dog peach cobbler, but, she looked the other way because her son was so fond of the dog. However, this fondness for peaches almost got Bowser killed.

My great grandmother, Laura, was drying peaches on an early July Day sometime around 1933. Papa said you could smell those peaches from a mile away. Laura had placed an old bed sheet on top of a well house and the peaches were peeled, sliced and then placed on top of this bed sheet. The peaches were nearly dry when Bowser found them. Laura walked out of the house and found Bowser lying on top of the bed sheet asleep after he had consumed all those dried peaches. Laura almost killed that dog. But, the dog was valuable in one respect. The dog was an outstanding varmint killer.

Papa said, "All those years I thought the dog was dumb. It wouldn't back down from any critter. Old Bowser had scars on his nose and face from many a fight with a big ground hog." My Papa hated ground hogs. They dug under the foundations of his barn. They ate

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Mickey Cummings  
**Around The Farm**

## Bumfuzzled

The annual recognition of fathers has arrived. This Father's Day finds more "Bumfuzzled Fathers" than at any other Father's Day in history. First of all, let me tell you that you probably won't find "bumfuzzled" in Webster's Dictionary, nor in any other dictionary for that matter.

However, bumfuzzled is a very important word for any educated person's vocabulary. Growing up here in the mountains if you wanted to express your feelings of total frustration, complete bewilderment, being puzzled, baffled and absolutely at your wits end, not knowing what to do, the word that best defined that feeling was bumfuzzled.

When Moses led the children of Israel out of Egypt and found himself looking into the Red Sea with mountains and desert on either side and Pharaoh's army breathing down his neck, I believe Moses must have looked up at God and said in Hebrew, "Lord, I am bumfuzzled."

When Jonah rebelled and ran away from God and ended up in the great fish's belly, don't you think ole Jonah might have said, "Lord, I am bumfuzzled."

When Daniel was thrown into the lion's den don't you suppose he may have said, "Lord, I am bumfuzzled."

When Paul and Silas were thrown in jail at Philippi, they probably said in Greek, "Lord, we are bumfuzzled."

Fathers, when you are bumfuzzled the solution is to pray. One father was really bumfuzzled. He had just spent several thousand dollars on his daughter's wedding and then read in the paper "the father GAVE the bride away."

With same sex marriages, artificial insemination and cloning, some radical feminists are saying that men are no longer needed to propagate the human race. With all of this talk of political correctness and tolerance, it seems the only two unprotected groups are fathers and Christians.

There are some radical voices in our soci-



Danny Parris  
**It's On My Mind**

See Parris, page 5A

## Chamber Benefits

There is no doubt about it; business is more complex and complicated than ever before. Business owners know that they need every advantage available to exceed goals, stay abreast of technology, develop new business, and retain customers.

If you are a business owner in the Blairsville-Union County area and not already a member of our Chamber, let me share five reasons why I believe you should consider joining the Blairsville-Union County Chamber of Commerce.

**Increase Your Customer Base**  
As a Chamber member you can make contact with new prospects and grow your business overall.

One of the most valuable perks of a Chamber membership is access to a network of dynamic business owners and a number of potential customers. By regularly attending our many Chamber functions, you position your company to reach the next level and have the opportunity to meet your next customer or supplier. And what about those times when you want to create a bigger presence for your organization?

Our sponsorship opportunities give your company the chance to significantly increase visibility.

**Gain Significant Visibility**  
Receiving more than 14,000 annual inquiries from newcomers, visitors, fellow businesses, and potential clients, the Chamber sends first referrals to our member businesses.

All member businesses in good standing are listed in our annual membership directory, which every Chamber member receives and is available to newcomers moving to the area.

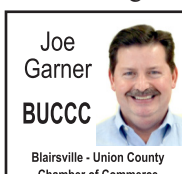
Advertising in this full color community magazine is available to Chamber members only and is an excellent way to promote your business.

The Chamber also provides its membership directory on its website, offering members 24/7 exposure worldwide.

**Receive Up-To-Date Business Info**  
Members are kept up-to-date on all Chamber activities and recent business developments through our ChamberMatters weekly e-newsletter.

Additionally, members receive special notices and broadcast emails as important

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Joe Garner  
**BUCC**  
Blairsville - Union County Chamber of Commerce

## Wisdom of my Elders

My whole life I've hung out with folks older than myself. When I was a youngster and we had company, the kids would be in one room and I'd be with the adults. I wanted to learn something new, and I wasn't likely to learn from children my own age. I still like to hang with the adults, only now they are senior citizens and I continue to digest every bit of wisdom I can garner from our times together.

I have two wonderful lady friends who have past that three quarter century mark, and are still developing, still learning and still working on being healthier. Both Betty and Donna make a point of shopping at the Farmers Market. But it isn't just a shopping trip or the buzz we all get from such an old fashion community hoe down that brings them there. It's their commitment to "better living".

Tuesday night I ran into Betty, as she strolled up from down yonder to the upper parking lot to meet me at my car. OK, here's my first lesson I'm learning tonight from Betty. She's got twenty five years on me and she parks in the lower parking lot, a half acre from the market - when there is tons of space 20 feet away. I feel less than adequate at that moment. We get into a dozen different conversations at one time, we always do. She's excited at the prospect of being a great grandmother in just a few weeks. We cover what books we've been reading, and of course, our work schedules (Betty has her own, very successful pet sitting business). Then we discuss the movie "Fork Over Knives" and she tells me that she's almost "meatless", now. I want to care so much about what I ingest when I'm her age!

Donna is a swimmer. Well, maybe not a swimmer as much as she uses the water to keep her body limber. We see each other at the pool a good deal, and of course, the Farmers Market. Donna reads everything in sight, and I don't mean romance novels. She is traveling on a never ending learning path. Recently she gave me a stack of articles from different periodicals she had read, all pertaining to feeding the planet, soil to spoon, trends in roof gardens, etc. She has ideas for growing the Farmers Market and she is willing to brain storm these ideas with me. I adore the time we get to share, and I'm always a little wiser when I leave her presence.

One article she gave me ended with a quote from the naturalist, John Muir. Muir loved Union County. He was often an overnight visitor at the Logan Turnpike Mill during his foot travels, over 150 years ago. The quote made me realize that our little Farmers Market is part of a much bigger picture, and I'm so proud of our

See Leone, page 5A



JoAnne Leone  
**Farmers Market Moment**

## Budget Process

**Q. When do you and the county begin the budget process for 2013?**

A. We have already passed out the budget information to all departments and have requested that information be returned to the office by the end of the month.

**Q. Do the department heads simply take last year's budget and adjust it?**

A. No. We require all departments to look at their entire budget each year and see what changes can be made to reduce it where possible. No item is sacred and we ask them to look at each item for the possibility of making reductions as necessary.

**Q. Is this type of budgeting the same idea as "zero based" budgeting.**

A. It is virtually the same. Many government agencies simply require all the departments to turn in a budget that is a certain percentage over or under the previous year's budget. A zero based budget means that the entire budget is dissected and started over each year. This is an extremely difficult process that could take several months. We do not have the extra staff to follow this strategy, but instead achieve the same results by requiring all line items to be examined, changed or adjusted each year, so that they are all reviewed by the departments.

**Q. Who reviews the budget requests from the departments?**

A. First, it is reviewed by our accounting director who makes any notes necessary or addresses any questions she has. Once those are answered the budget is then given to me for review. I individually look at every line item of every department.

**Q. How many different line items or budget items are in the Union County budget?**

A. There are 1829 different budget items and it is a very long process for all of us to deal with. However, in the end it is worth it, because everyone feels they have a fair budget and any changes that I ask for are discussed with the department and we come to a mutual agreement.

**Q. How does Union County manage to keep a balanced budget?**

A. Because we all work very hard at following the budget each month during the year. If we have a department getting out of budget, meaning they are spending more than allotted to them, we let them know that they



Lamar Paris  
**Q & A**

See Paris, page 5A

# Letters

To the Editor

## Learn from History

Dear Editor,

"The aim of public education is not to fill the young of the species with knowledge and awaken their intelligence...Nothing could be further from the truth. The aim... is simply to reduce as many individuals as possible to the same safe level, to breed and train a standardized citizenry, to put down dissent and originality. That is the aim in the United States and that is its aim everywhere else." -- H. L. Mencken, from an article in The American Mercury, 1924  
Cancer infects the physical body gradually. It is no different with the Body Politic.

George Mitchell, Blairsville

## Get Educated

Dear Editor,

I agree facts are important when considering the TSPLOST tax. So here are some facts.

**GDOT's total budget for 2011 was \$1.9 billion.**

The proposed TSPLOST tax would collect approximately \$1.8 billion a year statewide. That is a 95 percent increase to the GDOT budget, a huge increase for any government department, and a department that former Governor Purdue likened to the Enron debacle. On Feb. 27th, WSB-TV reported GDOT's audit is still a mess with tens of millions of dollars unaccounted for. Once this tax is passed, there is no going back, it will last 10 years and possibly 20 as the plan itself calls for 20 years.

**The poor will suffer disproportionately compared to any other segment on the economic scale.**

Food stamps only provide a portion of a poor person's food bill as anyone on Food Stamps can tell you. The local Food pantries run shortages on a regular basis and calls are put out through the NGN for help with donations from the local community. The poor have to pay their utility bills such as home heating, electricity, etc. the same as anyone else, and this TSPLOST tax will be added onto those bills. Manufacturing gets an energy exemption with this tax while the poor pay the tax on their energy use. The poor pay the same taxes as the rich and middle class but suffer more from those high taxes. To say otherwise is disincentive.

**U.S.129/Murphy Highway project is scheduled for the 8-10 year of the tax period.**

More than 50 percent of all TSPLOST revenue expected to be collected in Union County will go to other county Region projects before Union ever gets any of the TIA funds for the 129/Murphy Highway project. No mention is made by anyone where the \$25 million not provided by the TIA funds will come from for this project. No mention is made if there is an unexpected shortfall of projected taxes collected. No mention has been made by our Commissioner where the 25 percent share the county can expect to be used, i.e. roads, bridges, etc. There are no traffic jams on Murphy Highway; the highway handles the traffic very well. This project is on the list because it is a wish list, not a needs list. As far as auto accidents, we have them all over the county, including Highway 515 which is four-laned. Many businesses will be shut down or bypassed if this project goes through and that will hurt our local economy and put small owners out of business.

**Union County will collect approximately \$40 million over 10 years from a 1-cent sales tax.**

More than 90 percent of that tax will be paid by local residents. Union county will get

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## Chamber of Commerce events

For details and future events see events calendar at [www.VisitBlairsvilleGA.com](http://www.VisitBlairsvilleGA.com)

### Wednesday, June 13

2pm Tour Misty Mountain Model Railroad-16 Misty Mountain Lane

### Thursday, June 14

12pm Rotary Club of Union County - St. Francis of Assisi Church  
6pm All You Can Eat Lobster! - The Lodge at Copperhead

### Friday, June 15

8am Union County Farmers Market - Trash To Treasure Sale  
11am Ribbon Cutting and Open House for Neighbors Hand  
11:30am Business Roundtable for Solo Entrepreneurs - Union County Community Center  
7pm Friday Night Concert, Collins Brothers - Historic Union County Court House  
7pm You can be the Star Karaoke - Lodge at Copperhead

### Saturday, June 16

7am Union County Farmer's Market - 148 Old Smokey Rd  
8am Union County Republican Meeting - The Lodge at Copperhead  
4pm Cruise - In On The Square - Downtown Blairsville  
6:30pm Summer Concert Series, Gator Band - The Lodge at Copperhead

### Monday, June 18

9am Garden tour - GA Mt. Research & Education Center  
11am Summer Reading Program - Union County Public Library  
12pm Blairsville Kiwanis Club Monthly Meeting - Steve's Cookie Jar Restaurant  
6pm Free Texas Hold 'em Tournament - The Lodge at Copperhead  
6pm Nutrition Class & Weight Loss Challenge ~ Monday Evening Challenge - Beil Chiropractic Clinic

### Tuesday, June 19

8am Tri-State Business Women's weekly meeting - Cooks Restaurant  
3pm Community Massage Clinic - Paradise Hills, Resort & Spa  
6pm S.C.O.R.E. Workshop - sponsored by Blairsville & Towns County Chamber of Commerce

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